

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Copyright information embedded in a digital content can always be sampled and the copyright of the digital content can be protected reliably, by using a sampling program which is automatically activated and samples the copyright information from the digital content. For example, the digital content added with the sampling program is distributed or an application program added with the sampling program for utilizing the digital content is distributed so that the copyright information can be reliably sampled from the digital content and the utilization of the digital content can be controlled in accordance with the copyright information. If a file containing a plurality of digital contents is used, copyright information is embedded in each digital content and the copyright information is sampled from each digital content. It is possible to control the utilization of each digital content in accordance with the sampled copyright information.